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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT — MONDAY, November 27, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "MEATS IN THE FREEZER LOCKER." Information from the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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The morning mail brings a letter from our Washington correspondent with some more points on using freezer lockers to advantage. She writes:

"Right now farm families are beginning to slaughter their meat animals and a good part of the dressed carcasses will go into frozen storage. Sportsmen, too, use their lockers in the fall hunting and fishing season for storing venison and other game, birds, and even fish.

"So I've been talking again to Mr. Kenneth F. Warner of the Bureau of Animal Industry to get a few suggestions on preparing different foods for storage at this time of year. As in our previous talk, Mr. Warner said, 'Don't give people the idea that locker plants replace household refrigerators, pressure canners, or curing barrels. They just supplement other ways of saving food. And do encourage folks to dress smaller amounts of meat at frequent intervals, use it up, and replace it.'

"Mr. Warner thinks that while a 6 to 12 months' storage period is not impractical for meats that have been properly selected, prepared, packaged, frozen, and stored, in many cases a shorter period is preferable. The longer the storage period the more the more chance there is for meat to dry out. Three months is best for keeping pork, as the fat may tend to become rancid over longer periods.

"Slaughtering requires planning, Mr. Warner points out. Planning which animals to dress first. And even back of that, when to have calves, pigs, and lambs mature to fit into the storage plan, and how to keep a supply of tender chickens coming along.

"Now about preparing meat for locker storage. The first thing is to select animals of the size and fatness that will produce the weight and quality of cuts preferred by the family. A good covering of fat makes the meat more desirable and protects the lean from drying out while it is stored in the freezer. Of course all meats should be from healthy, thrifty animals and suitable for eating.

"Prompt and thorough chilling is very important. Pork and poultry are not aged, but are packaged and frozen as soon as they are thoroughly chilled. Beef and lamb will get more tender if you keep them in the chill room for a week or ten days after slaughter. Veal and venison are usually cut and frozen as soon as chilled.

"Whether the owner or the locker manager cuts up the carcass, you can have your roasts and steaks cut as large or as small as you wish. You can say how much fat shall be ground with the sausage or ground beef, and how closely the meat is to be trimmed. Remember that thin steaks such as are often cut from the round may dry out if stored too long. Put away a few juicy loin steaks cut an inch or an inch and a half thick. If you have any cuts boned, better have them completely trimmed and tied or sewed into compact roasts before they are frozen. Salt and spices are generally added to sausage after thawing. Ground meat is less suitable to prolonged freezer storage than unground meat. You can grind less-tender cuts after you thaw them, if you don't want them for stews or braised dishes.

"Make sure the paper used for wrapping the individual pieces is one that has given satisfaction. Complaints are sometimes heard of undesirable flavors imparted by the wrapping paper. Moisture-proof and vapor-proof paper is desirable, and it must also be easy to fold and wrap. It should be tough, capable of receiving an ink stamp, and inexpensive.

"Each piece must be labeled with the locker number, the name and the storage date. It's a good thing to know when the meat was put in the locker so that the pieces which have been stored the longest can be taken out first.

"Spread out the packaged meats on the coils or shelves of the sharp freezer so air can circulate around them. Piling them close together slows up freezing. If the locker plant has no sharp freezer it is particularly necessary to spread the packages in the locker box.

"Mr. Warner also says that when a family brings in products prepared at home for the locker and expects to take home other foods after doing errands or visiting, two trips to the locker are usually necessary. In warm weather it's a poor plan to leave either the incoming or outgoing foods in the car while the family shops.

"You might have a homemade insulated box to protect frozen foods for a few days after you take them home from the locker plant. Otherwise put the food in the household refrigerator, if you want it within a day or two, or cook it promptly and use at once. You can thaw meats and poultry first or cook them without thawing. Thawed frozen foods generally cook in less time than similar fresh cuts. If you put an unthawed roast in the oven, it will require time to thaw as well as to cook.

"Here are a few points on preparing poultry and fish for freezer locker storage. Draw poultry after chilling but just before freezing it. Then it will be ready to cook as soon as it comes out of the locker. Sometimes poultry is glazed,- that is, after freezing it is dipped several times into near freezing water. Each time a thin layer of ice freezes on it, until a thick coating is formed.

"Carry fish to the locker plant in cracked ice. Then clean them, wash them, have them frozen and glazed and finally wrapped.

"Later on I'll write you about preparing different fruits and vegetables for locker storage. Meantime folks need to remember about planning ahead for a good meat supply. And they will do well to use some of the less-tender cuts as they go along, rather than have them all left at the end of each storage interval."

That's all of our information this week about storing meats in freezer lockers.

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